

Holy Mountains.

By Th. Graebner





I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
(Ps. 121, 1.)

Holy Mountains

Modern Pilgrimages to the
Mountains of the Bible

Retold from the Narratives
of Travellers and Explorers

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1. Mountains.

"The everlasting hills!" how calm they rise,
Bold witnesses to an Almighty Hand!
We gaze with longing heart and eager eyes,
And feel as if short pathway might suffice
From those pure regions to the heavenly land.

At early dawn, when the first rays of light
Play like a rose-wreath on the peaks of snow;
And late when half the valley seems in night,
Yet still around each pale majestic height
The sun's last smile has left a crimson glow; —

Then the heart longs, it calls for wings to fly, —
Above all lower scenes of earth to soar,
Where yonder golden clouds arrested lie,
Where granite cliffs and glaciers gleam on high
As with reflected light from Heaven's own door.

Whence this strange spell, by thoughtful souls confest
Ever in shadow of the mountains found?
'Tis the deep voice within our human breast,
Which bids us seek a refuge and a rest
Above, beyond what meets us here around!

Ever to men of God the hills were dear,
Since on the slopes of Ararat the dove
Plucked the wet olive-pledge of hope and cheer;
Or Israel stood entranced in silent fear,
While God on Sinai thundered from above.....

And once on Hermon was a vision given
Sublime as that which Israel feared to view,
When the transfigured Lord of earth and heaven,
Mortality's dim curtain lifted, riven,
Revealed His glory to His chosen few.

On mountain heights of Galilee He prayed
While others slept, and all beneath was still;
From Olivet's recess of awful shade
Thrice was that agonized petition made,
"O that this cup might pass, if such Thy will!"....

And on Mount Zion, in the better land,
Past every danger of the pilgrim way,
At our Redeemer's feet we hope to stand,
And learn the meanings of His guiding hand
Through all the changes of our earthly day.

Then hail, calm sentinels of heaven, again!
Proclaim your message, as in ages past!
Tell us that pilgrims shall not toil in vain,
That Zion's mount we surely shall attain,
Where all home longings find a home at last!

Meta Heusser.

2. Ararat.

Gen. 8,4. And the ark rested . . . upon the mountains of Ararat.



Mount Ararat.

The mountain known to Europeans as Ararat consists of two immense conical elevations (one peak considerably lower than the other), towering in massive and majestic grandeur from the valley of the Aras, the ancient Araxes. Smith and Dwight remark that in no part of the world had they seen any mountain whose imposing appearance could plead half so powerfully as this a claim to the honor of having once been the stepping-stone between the old world and the new.

"It appeared," says Ker Porter, "as if the hugest mountains of the world had been piled upon each other to form this one sublime immensity of earth, and rocks, and snow. The icy peaks of its double heads rose majestically into the clear and cloudless heavens; the sun blazed bright upon them,



The Ark on Mount Ararat.

and the reflection sent forth a dazzling radiance equal to other suns. My eye, not able to rest for any length of time upon the blinding glory of its summits, wandered down the apparently interminable sides, till I could no longer trace their vast lines in the mists of the horizon; when an irrepressible impulse immediately carrying my eye upward again refixed my gaze upon the awful glare of Ararat."

To the same effect Morier writes: "Nothing can be more beautiful than its shape, more awful than its height. All the surrounding mountains sink into insignificance when compared to it. It is perfect in all its parts; no hard rugged feature, no unnatural prominences; everything is in harmony, and all combines to render it one of the sublimest objects in nature."

Several attempts had been made to reach the top of Ararat, but few persons had got beyond the limit of perpetual snow. The honor was reserved to a German, Dr. Parrot, in the employment of Russia, who in his *Reise zum Ararat*, gives the following particulars: "The summit of the Great Ararat is in $39^{\circ} 42'$ north lat., and $61^{\circ} 55'$ east long. from Ferro. Its perpendicular height is 16,254 Paris feet above the level of the sea, and 13,350 above the plain of the Araxes. The little Ararat is 12,284 Paris feet above the sea, and 9,561 above the plain of the Araxes." After he and his party had failed in two attempts to ascend, the third was successful, and on the 27th of September, 1829, they stood on the summit of Mount Ararat. It was a slightly convex, almost circular platform, about 200 feet in diameter, composed of eternal ice, unbroken by a rock or stone; on account of the great distances, nothing could be seen distinctly. Parrot describes the secondary summit about 400 yards distant from the highest point, and on the gentle depression which connects the two eminences he surmises that the ark rested.

The region immediately below the limits of perpetual snow is barren, and unvisited by beast or bird. Wagner describes the silence and solitude that reign there as quite overpowering. Arguri, the only village known to have been built on its slopes, was the spot where, according to tradition, Noah planted his vineyard. Lower down, in the plain of Araxes, is Nakhchevan, where the patriarch is reputed to have been buried.

3. Sinai.

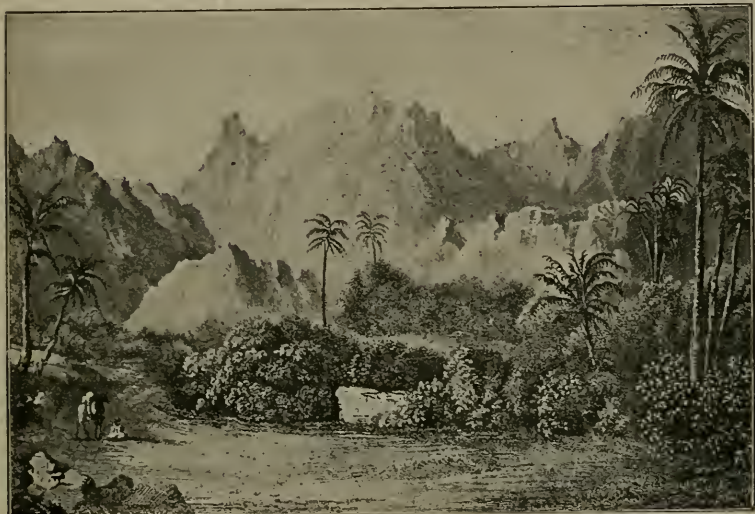
Exodus 24, 16. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai.

A strong East wind had miraculously parted the waters of the Red Sea in the neighborhood of what is now Suez, the Israelites had gone through on dry ground, and the waters returning to their level had destroyed the army of Pharaoh. The limits of the Red Sea have changed somewhat since those days, but there can be no question as to the general track of the Israelites after the passage. They continued in the road of all travelers between the Sea and the table land of the Wilderness, in a southern direction. Onward they marched to the southern point of the Sinai peninsula. At its lower tip there are two great clusters of mountains, one of which, the Serbal, is very probably the one referred to at various times in the book of Exodus

as "The Mount of God". The entire elevation of land was called Horeb. Here Moses had kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law. In one of the ravines at the foot of this mount the Children of Israel now pitched their tents, and here the Amalekites were defeated by Israel while Aaron and Hur held up the hands of Moses.

Dean Stanley visited Mount Serbal in 1853 and describes it as follows:

"It is one of the finest forms I have ever seen. It is a vast mass of peaks, which, in most points of view, may be reduced to five, the number adopted by the Beduins. These five peaks, all of granite, rise so precipitously, so column-like, from the broken ground which forms the root of the



Gebel Serbal, the Mount of God, seen from Wady Feiran.

mountain, as at first sight to appear inaccessible. But they are divided by steep ravines, filled with fragments of fallen granite. Up the central ravine, Wady Abou Hamad ('valley of the father of wild figs', so called from half-a-dozen fig trees in its course), we mounted. It was toilsome, but not difficult, and in about three hours we reached a ridge between the third and fourth peak. Here we rested; close by us were the traces of a large leopard. A little beyond was a pool of water surrounded by an old enclosure.

"Three quarters of an hour more brought us over smooth blocks of granite to the top of the third or central peak. The steep ascent was broken by innumerable shrubs like sage or thyme, which grew to the very summit; and at last, also helped by loose stones arranged by human hands (whether

yesterday or two thousand years ago), and through a narrow pass of about twenty feet, to the two eminences of which this peak is formed.

"The highest of these is a huge block of granite; on this, as on the back of some petrified turtle, you stand and overlook the whole Peninsula of Sinai. The Red Sea, with the Egyptian hills opposite; and the wide waste on the south, the village and grove of Tor just marked as a dark line on the shore; on the east the vast cluster of what is commonly called Sinai, with the peaks of St. Catherine.

"It was already dark by the time that we reached our encampment at the eastern extremity of the Wady Feiran. It was a beautiful sight to see on our way the mountains lit up from top to bottom with the red blaze which shot up from the watchfires of the Beduin tents. So they must have shone before the Pillar of Fire. The palm-groves of Feiran I saw only by the clear starlight; yet it was still possible to see how great must be the beauty of the luxuriant palms and feathery tamarisks — the wide glades below, the vast mountains above."

Lord Lindsay describes the approach to the Mount of God as follows:

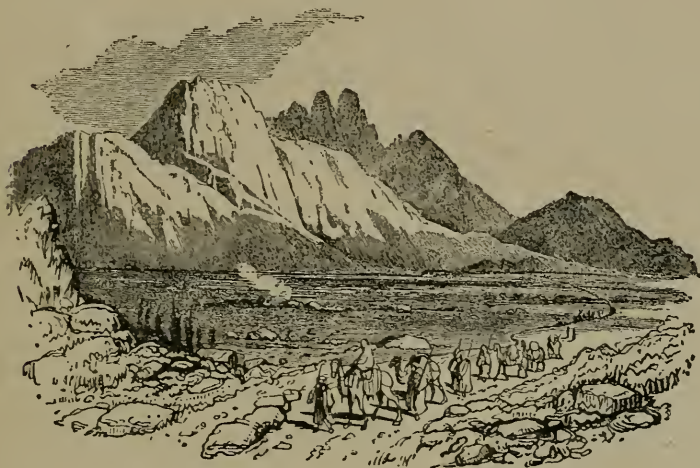
"For two hours and a half, every winding of the valley revealed new loveliness; it would be beautiful even with a single tree. At the first turning, after passing the ruined town, a most superb view of Mount Serbal opened on us, — every crag and pinnacle of his five peaks relieved clearly against a sky of the most delicious blue, and perfectly cloudless, — pale moon about half full, sailing in the pure ether above us — the eye could pierce far beyond her. Serbal was of a bluish gray, but the jagged rocks of the valley, forming the foreground of the picture, were black, the bright lights and deep broad shadows rendering them perfectly beautiful."

"It is impossible," says Professor Lepsius, "to describe the sublimity and majesty of these black mountain masses — rising, as they do, not in a wild and irregular form, but on a grand and imposing scale — at the foot of which I was standing, not separated from it by any projecting promontory or ledge, so abruptly does the whole body of the mountain start up from this point."

A remarkable picture of Mount Serbal as seen from the garden-like ravine called Wady Feiran, through which Israel passed, is shown in one of our illustrations.

The road continues amidst masses of rock, a thread of a stream just visible and here and there forming clear pools shrouded in palms. Reaching the head of the pass, the traveler sees far in the bosom of the mountains before him the cliffs which form the front of Sinai proper. The giant mass is approached through a wide valley, a long continued plain, enclosed between two steep mountain ranges of black and yellow granite and having at its end a prodigious mountain block, the Gebel Mousa or Mount of Moses, with its projecting front, the Willow-Head or Ras es-Sufsafeh.

The summit of Ras es-Sufsafeh is very clearly defined, rising high above all the other peaks near it. In front it descends in broken crags of naked granite to Wady er-Raha. The view from it is extensive. The whole extent of the plain of Er-Raha, measuring more than two miles in length, and ranging from one third to two thirds of a mile in breadth, is visible. The eye can follow its windings as it runs away among the mountains in the distance. From near the summit a wild ravine runs down the front of the mountain. Up this ravine the ascent may be made from the plain; it is rugged and steep, but an active mountaineer, such as Moses was, could easily accomplish it.



The plain Er-Raha, where Israel encamped before Mount Sinai.

There can scarcely be a doubt that Ras es-Sufsafeh is Sinai, "the mount of the Law." Every requirement of the sacred narrative is supplied and every incident illustrated by the features of the surrounding district. Here is a plain sufficient to contain the Israelitish camp, and so close to the mountain's base that barriers could be erected to prevent the rash or the heedless from touching it. Here is a mountain-top where the clouds that enshrined the Lord when he descended upon it would be visible to the vast multitude, even when in fear they would withdraw from the base and retire to a distance. From this peak the thunderings and the voice of Jehovah would resound with terrific effect through the plain, and away among the cliffs and glens of the surrounding mountains. When descending through the clouds that shrouded it, Moses could hear also the songs and shouts

of the infatuated people as they danced round the golden calf; and in "the brook that descends out of the mount" (Deut. 9,21), through the ravine into Er-Raha, he could cast the dust of the destroyed idol. In fact, the mountain, the plain, the streamlet, and the whole topography correspond in every respect to the historical account given by Moses."

The words of Dean Stanley are equally graphic and convincing: "No one who has approached the Ras Sufsafeh through that noble plain, or who has looked down upon the plain from that majestic height, will willingly part with the belief that these are the two essential features of the view of the Israelitish camp. That such a plain should exist at all in front of such a cliff is so remarkable a coincidence with the sacred narrative as to furnish a strong internal argument, not merely of its identity with the scene, but of the scene itself having been described by an eye-witness. The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answers to the 'bounds' which were to keep the people off from 'touching the mount.' The plain itself is not broken and uneven, and narrowly shut in, like almost all others in the range, but presents a long retiring sweep, against which the people could 'remove and stand afar off'. The cliff, rising like a huge altar, in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely grandeur from end to end of the whole plain, is the very image of 'the mount that might not be touched', and from which the voice of God might be heard far and wide over the stillness of the plain below, widened at that part to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the contiguous valleys. Here, beyond all other parts of the peninsula, in the sanctuary, withdrawn, as if in the 'end of the world,' from all the stir and confusion of earthly things."

Lord Lindsay has left the following description of his visit to Mount Sinai:

"Advancing up a narrow ravine at the extremity of the plain, and passing the garden with its lofty cypresses, we arrived under the walls of the Convent of St. Catherine, a regular monastic fortress — it has exactly the appearance of one, and is indeed, defended by guns against the Arabs." The monks are obliged to supply the Beduins with bread. But no Arabs are ever allowed to enter, except the servants of the convent.

Lord Lindsay ascended to the top of the mountain and identified the plain in front of it as the encampment of the Israelites. "There can be no doubt," he says, "that the Israelites encamped on the Er (or El) Raha; it is the largest, indeed the only large plain in all this district, — a noble expanse, covered with shrubs fit for pasturage, and a gentle slope." He believes that one of the lesser heights of Sinai was the actual spot on which God came down "on the top of the Mount" "in the sight of all the people."

"Yet what," he adds, "avails the inquiry, if we think merely of the stage, and not of the action performed on it? This is the wilderness of Sinai — there can be no doubt of that; and, whichever the individual mount may have been, every hill around heard the thunder and quaked at the sound of the trumpet, waxing louder and louder as God descended in the cloud, — and trembled at the 'still small voice', that, deeper than the thunder, and high above the trumpet, spoke to every man's ear and heart that fiery law — holy, and just, and good — existing from all eternity, which requires of man that spotless obedience which he cannot yield, and at the first transgression, even in thought, of its purity, lays him under the curse of eternal death — 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.'

"One only of Adam's seed, the man Christ Jesus, has fulfilled that law; we must travel to Jerusalem — we must look to the cross on Calvary, to obtain pardon for having broken it."

4. Pisgah.

I. Balaam.

Numbers 23,11—16: And Balak said unto Balaam, What hast thou done unto me? I took thee to curse mine enemies, and, behold, thou hast blessed them altogether. And he answered and said, Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth? And Balak said unto him, Come, I pray thee, with me unto another place, from whence thou mayest see them: thou shalt see but the utmost part of them, and shalt not see them all: and curse me them from thence. And he brought him into the field of Zophim, to the top of Pisgah, and built seven altars, and offered a bullock and a ram on every altar. And he said unto Balak, Stand here by thy burnt offering, while I meet the Lord yonder. And the Lord met Balaam, and put a word in his mouth, and said, Go again unto Balak, and say thus . . . 24,17: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth.

The Israelites had entered upon the last stage of their journey to Canaan. They are within sight of the land of promise, being encamped at the northern end of the Dead Sea, near the mouth of the River Jordan. By the aid of God they had, under their leader Moses, surmounted every difficulty and had conquered the heathen tribes on the east side of Jordan. But now, at the end of their journey, a graver danger faces them. Balak, King of Moab, finding that he cannot prevail against them by the power of his armies, has recourse to magical arts. By casting an evil spell upon

Israel he hopes to destroy God's people. He sends to the Euphrates for the famous magician to come and "curse Israel." Persons who had the real or pretended power of controlling evil spirits were frequently employed to foretell the future, to bless an undertaking, or to bring ruin upon an enemy. Balaam's fame as a man of this sort had traveled far beyond the limits of his native land. Before he accepts the invitation God lays upon him the duty to speak only the word which God shall say unto him. Arriving in Moab he is commanded to curse Jacob and to defy Israel, but instead of cursing he blesses, and promises to Israel increase beyond calculation. Then occurred the incident quoted at the head of this chapter. Offering sacrifices on the top of Mt. Pisgah the false prophet again blessed Israel when commanded to curse the people, and finally he pronounces the prophecy of the Redeemer that was to come out of the covenant nation, the Star that was to proceed from Jacob and the Sceptre that was to rise out of Israel.

Never was prophecy uttered under more extraordinary circumstances and the place which witnessed this event may well engage our attention.

Balaam and Balak stood on Pisgah in the land of Moab. It is first mentioned in connection with the approach of the Israelites to Palestine. They marched "from Bamoth in the valley, that is in the country of Moab, to the top of Pisgah, which looketh toward Jeshimon" (Num. 21, 20). Pisgah was thus on the table-land of Moab, and commanded a view of the western desert (Jeshimon). Another passage proves that it commanded a view of the camp of the Israelites. From other notices we learn that it was opposite and in sight of Jericho, and overhanging the northeastern angle of the Dead Sea.

The names Pisgah and Nebo seem to be used interchangeably. Very probably Pisgah was the name of the range and Nebo was one of its peaks. Beneath the mountain were celebrated springs. The ridge runs out west from the plateau of the Moab country, sinking gradually, and in a summit of which the slopes fall steeply on all sides. The flat top of the mountain is to the present day called Neba by the Arabians of the desert. From the fact that on Pisgah Balaam built altars and offered sacrifices we conclude that it probably was one of the ancient "high places" or heathen sanctuaries of Moab.

From the "high places" there dedicated to Baal, the Assyrian Prophet, with the King of Moab by his side, looked over the wide prospect: —

"He watch'd, till morning's ray
On lake and meadow lay,
And willow-shaded streams that silent sweep
Amid their banner'd lines,
Where, by their several signs,
The desert-wearied tribes in sight of Canaan sleep."

He saw in that vast encampment amongst the acacia groves, "how goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel." Like the watercourses of the mountains, like gardens by the side of his own great river Euphrates, with their aromatic shrubs, and their wide-spreading cedars — the lines of the camp were spread out before him. Ephraim was there with "the strength of the wild bull" of the north; Judah "couching like the lion" of the south; "a people dwelling alone," yet a mighty nation — "who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel?" He looked round from his high post over the table-lands of Moab, to the line of mountains stretching away to Edom, on the south — over the high platform of the Desert beyond the Dead Sea, where dwelt the tribe of Amalek, then "first of the nations" — over the Kenite, and for each his dirge of lamentation went up; till at the thought of his own distant land of "Asshur" — of the land beyond the Euphrates — of the dim vision of ships coming from the Western sea which lay behind the hills of Palestine, "to afflict Asshur and to afflict Eber" — he burst into the bitter cry, "Alas, who shall live when God doeth this!" and he rose up, and returned to his place.

The view of Balaam from the top of Pisgah and of Peor is the first of those which have made the name celebrated. But it is the second view, which within so short a time succeeded to it, whilst Israel was still encamped in the acacia groves, that has become a proverb throughout the world. To these same mountains of Abarim to the top of Pisgah — to a high-place dedicated to the heathen Nebo, as Balaam's standing-place had been consecrated to Peor — "Moses went up from the 'desert-plain' of Moab . . . over against Jericho."

II. Moses.

Deuteronomy 34,1—7: And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan. And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I swore unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither. So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord. And He buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated.



The Jordan Valley north of Jericho.

In the first month of the fortieth year of Israel's sojourn in the Wilderness they arrived for the second time at a city called Kadesh. This was an arid country and there was not sufficient water for the multitude. As frequently before, so at this disappointment again the people murmured against Moses, saying, "Would God that we had died when our brethren died! Why have you brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die?" They even expressed the wish that they had remained in Egypt. Because of this murmuring of the people the place was henceforth called Meribah, signifying Strife.

In spite of this latest exhibition of their weakness in the faith, the Lord commanded Moses and Aaron to speak to the rock, and it shall give forth water for the people. Moses and Aaron gathered the Israelites together before the rock and then Moses upbraided them: "Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?" Speaking thus Moses lifted his hand and with his rod struck the rock twice. Water came forth abundantly and the lives of the people were saved, but to Moses and Aaron the Lord administered a strong rebuke. Instead of speaking to the rock, as he was commanded to do, Moses struck it twice. Moreover, he doubted the ability of God, or His willingness to bear longer with these "rebels". The stern words are pronounced: "Ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." The punishment was severe, but want of faith and obedience on the part of the leaders could not be overlooked or pass unpunished. The people had seen it and might be led away by the evil example.

The people now prepare for the last stage of the journey to Canaan. Turning southward so as to go around the country of the Edomites, the Israelites reach Mt. Hor. Here Aaron dies and is buried. Mt. Hor is identified by most travelers with a precipitous mount nearly five thousand feet high, forming the principal elevation in the mount of Seir. A small Mohammedan shrine marks the reputed site of Aaron's burial-place. Aaron was indeed "gathered unto his people"; he was blessed in his end and was united with the saints above. Yet his death, excluding him as it did, from the goal of the wanderings in the wilderness, was a testimony against the action of the two leaders at Kadesh.

Coming to Mt. Hor the Lord spoke to Moses that here Aaron shall die and not enter into the Land of Promise, "because ye rebelled against My word at the water of Meribah." The entire nation remained at Mt. Hor for thirty days, mourning the death of Aaron. Aaron died on the first day of the fifth month in the fortieth year of the desert wanderings, at the age of 123 years.

Arriving in the plains of Moab, the encounter with King Balak and the reluctant blessing of the people by Balaam took place. Before Israel



Mount Nebo.

crossed the River Jordan into the land of Canaan, Moses addressed them with a series of discourses, in which he reviewed the events and experiences of the past forty years, and impounded on them many eloquent exhortations to gratitude, obedience, and loyalty to the Lord who led them out of Egypt.



Moses on Mount Nebo.

These discourses are recorded in the book of Deuteronomy. Within sight of the promised land, feeling that his death is approaching, Moses delivers his final charges to the people. Moses refers to the sentence pronounced against him: "The Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither." "For your sakes," — had the unbelief of

Moses gone unpunished, the people would have been hardened in their own transgression. For their sakes, therefore, it was impossible to overlook it.

Having made an end of his admonitions to the people, Moses, in obedience to the divine command, ascends to the top of Mt. Nebo, the eminence called Pisgah, whence he views the Land of Promise.

There is no need to suppose that there was anything miraculous in this vision of the whole land. From the mountains of Moab travelers tell us that they can see the entire valley of the Jordan. The Mediterranean Sea, fifty miles distant, can be seen like a silver streak in the glittering sunshine. Such extensive views are favored by the exceptional clearness of the atmosphere in Palestine.

An English traveler, Canon Tristram, describes a visit which he and his fellow-travelers paid to the range of Nebo, and the magnificent prospect they had from the height which they supposed might possibly be the Pisgah of Moses. It was about three miles south-west of Heshbon, and one and a half miles due west of Main. The elevation was considered to be about 4500 feet; yet the ascent was not rugged, and for several hours they rode along the ridge. The day was clear, and to the north and east they saw the hills of Gilead, and "the vast expanse of the goodly Belka, one waving ocean of corn and grass." Southwards appeared Mounts Hor and Seir, with other granite peaks of Arabia, in the direction of Akabah. Then, turning westwards, there lay distinctly before them the Dead Sea and the whole valley of the Jordan, "all the familiar points in the neighborhood of Jerusalem." Looking over Jordan, "the eye rested on Gerizim's rounded top; and farther still opened the plain of Esdraelon, the shoulder of Carmel, or some other intervening height, just showing to the right of Gerizim, while the faint and distant bluish haze beyond it told us that there was 'the sea, the utmost sea.' It seemed as if but a whiff were needed to brush off the haze, and reveal it clearly. Northward, again, rose the distant outline of unmistakable Tabor, aided by which we could identify Gilboa and Little Hermon. Snowy Hermon's top was mantled with cloud, and Lebanon's highest range must have been exactly shut behind it; but in front, due north of us, stretched in long line the dark forests of Ajlun, bold and undulating, with the deep sides of mountains, here and there whitened by cliffs, terminating in Mount Gilead, behind Ramoth-Gilead." This seems to realize to the full what was anciently exhibited to the eye of Moses, and shows the representation given of his extensive prospect to have been no ideal picture.

But between him and that "good land" the deep valley of the Jordan intervened. "So Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord." His tomb, however, was not,

like Aaron's, on the high mountain summit, an object of pilgrimage for future ages. "He died in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord, and He buried him in a 'ravine' in the land of Moab before Bethpeor, but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day." In a ravine before Bethpeor, — that is, in front of the height from which Balaam's last prophecy had been delivered; and so, doubtless, somewhere in the gorges of Pisgah. But beyond this, "no man knew."

Thus did God not only bury Moses, but buried his sepulchre also lest it should become a shrine of idol worship to future generations. The Epistle of Jude, in verse 9, says that Michael, the archangel, contending with the devil, disputed about the body of Moses. Evidently, the prince of the evil angels wanted the body for himself for the purpose of seducing the people into paying divine honor to it. From this crime, to which the Jews might easily have been tempted by the example of their heathen neighbors, they were prevented by the fact that God Himself buried His servant in the mountain country of Moab, and permitted no man to know of his sepulchre.

5. Gilboa.

1. Samuel 31, 1—6.

Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa. And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchishua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his armorbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armorbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armorbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armorbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

Gilboa, — the name has a pleasant signification, meaning a bubbling fountain, but to the Bible reader brings gloomy memories of ancient crime and superstition.

Saul, the first king of Israel, had too long resisted the spirit of God and had sinned against better judgment. It is recorded that he received no longer any answer from God, and at this evidence of divine disfavor, the just punishment of his disobedience, unbelief, and ingratitude, he sought counsel with the spirits of darkness. Contrary to the warnings uttered by the Lord through the mouth of Moses, Saul, when he saw himself

and his army in a situation of great peril, consulted the spirits of the dead. He visited the hag of Endor, expecting from her supernatural arts that counsel which was no longer forthcoming to him from the prophets of God.

We know the result. On the following day Saul was defeated by the Philistines, his three sons were slain, and he died by his own hand. When the tidings were carried to David, he broke out into a song of mourning: "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no rain upon you, neither dew, nor field of offering!"

The circumstances of this narrative would alone suffice to direct our attention to the mountains which bound the great plain of Esdraelon on the south-east and are interposed between it and the Jordan valley. Mount Gilboa is in the hilly district west of the Jordan and about twenty-five miles south-west of the Sea of Galilee. At its back is a village now called Gelbon, in whose name may be recognized that of the ancient mountain which bounds the valley Jezreel on the south.

A visit to this region gives great vividness to several of the Scripture narratives, but especially to that of the fatal battle in which Saul fell. There is a range of hills about six miles north of Gilboa, and of equal elevation, which is called in the Book of Judges "hill of Moreh." Away behind this hill, hidden from view, is the village of Endor. The army of the Philistines was encamped on the north side of the valley, and Saul took up a position on the north-east base of Gilboa. From the brow of the hill above his camp Saul had a full view of the enemy, and he was struck with terror at their numbers. The position he had chosen was a bad one. Before him stretched out the valley in a gentle incline towards the camp of the Philistines, while immediately behind the army of the Israelites the hill rose steep and rocky. In case of a disaster, retreat was impossible for them up the steep hill side, while the Philistines had all the advantage of the gentle rise for their attack. On the night before the battle Saul went to Endor and there received the message of doom from the apparition raised up by the witch: Not only shall Israel be delivered into the hand of the Philistines, but Saul and his sons were to die.

The battle seems to have begun early in the morning, when the king was still wearied from the journey to Endor and dispirited as a result of his experience. The Israelites were broken at once by the fierce attack of the enemy. As they attempted to flee up the sides of Gilboa, a terrible slaughter was inflicted upon them by the Philistines. While the terror-stricken masses were clambering up the rugged slopes they were completely exposed to the arrows of the Philistine archers. "They fell down slain in Mount Gilboa"; "the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons," probably when they tried to rally their troops. The three sons fell beside their father; "and the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit

him; and he was sore wounded of the archers." Then Saul, his kingdom gone, and utter ruin staring him in the face, took his sword and fell upon it. David then uttered and caused to be written his lament over Saul and over Jonathan: "The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy (Gilboa's) high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love for women. How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"

The Philistines took the body of Saul and fastened it to the wall of the neighboring fortress of Bethshean, from whence it was snatched by a few brave men from Gilead, on the opposite side of the Jordan.

The ridge of Gilboa is bleak and bare. The soil is scanty, and the great limestone rocks crop out in jagged cliffs and naked crowns, giving the whole a look of painful barrenness. One would almost think, says the Dutch traveler Van de Velde, on looking at it, that David's words, — "Let there be no rain upon you, neither dew, nor field of offering" (fields bearing crops, from which firstfruits are offered) — were fulfilled.

The highest point of Gilboa is said to have an elevation of about 2200 feet above the sea, and 1200 above the valley of Jezreel. The range extends in length some ten miles from west to east.

6. Moriah.

2. Chronicles 3,1. Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshingfloor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Entering Jerusalem from the North through the Damascus Gate and walking through the Mohammedan quarter we arrive at a point from which a great view is obtained of the ancient south-eastern portion of the city.

Think for a moment where we are, and on what we are looking!

Do you notice that mass of rock at your feet? That is the native rock of Mount Moriah, just as Abraham found it when he climbed this hill for the offering-up of his son; just as David saw it when he walked over this hill

from Mount Zion* in order to build his altar. A building constructed with eight corners covers the site of the altar on which Solomon brought his sacrifice when the Temple was dedicated. This building is called the Dome



Abraham's Sacrifice.

of the Rock but is frequently misnamed the Mosque of Omar, — why, no one knows, for it is not properly a mosque, or Mohammedan house of worship, though regarded by the Mohammedans as a very sacred place;

* Assuming that Mount Zion is that elevation in the Holy City which now bears that name. Many scholars believe that Zion was identical with the Temple-hill, Moriah. It is frequently used in the Bible for "Jerusalem".

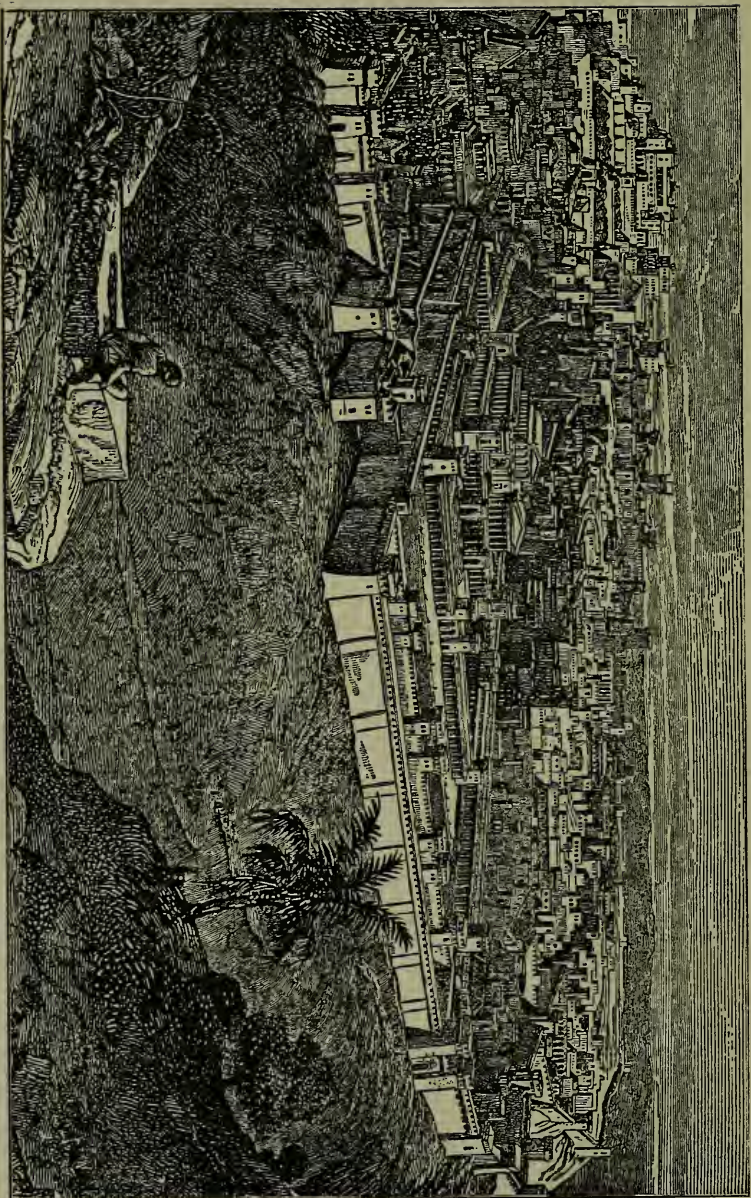
and it was not built by the Caliph Omar, but by Abd el Melik, about 700 A.D. Its upper part is covered with porcelain tiles and the lower part with marble. It stands on an elevated platform, with marble steps leading up to it. According to Mohammedan regulation all who walk up those steps must take off their shoes, or put slippers over them, before they walk upon the upper platform for it is "holy ground".

It is proved, without doubt, that the Dome of the Rock, or the Mosque of Omar, covers the true site of Solomon's Temple. The plateau is about 1,500 feet from north to south, 900 feet from east to west, sustained by a massive wall rising on the exterior from 50 to 80 feet above the present level of the ground. The general level of this plateau is about 2,420 feet; but towards the east at the Golden Gate, it is not filled up to this level by some 20 feet or so.

It is proved that the Holy City is built upon a series of rocky spurs, and that in early days the site of Jerusalem was a series of rocky slopes; therefore, when we get to the rock, we see it just as it was before the city was built. The rock-levels examined by means of shafts and tunnels show that the ridge of rock at the north-east angle is 162 feet below the sacred rock; at the north-west angle 150 feet below this same rock; south-west angle 163 feet. The temple was not placed in a hole; it was to be a conspicuous building — the building, in short, of Jerusalem. So it must have stood on this platform which was raised by means of walls and arches, the spaces being used as store-rooms; secret passages, underground cisterns to hold water, to store both the spring water and the rain water — one cistern so large that it is called the "underground sea." This platform was raised and carried across to the highest point of rock, which, remember, was the threshing-floor of Araunah, the Jebusite, by which "floor" the angel's foot had stayed.

The lower ridge of rock having been selected, black mould was cut away at an angle. In this black mould no stone chippings have been found but fragments of potsherds. The mould varies in depth from two feet to eight or ten feet. The rock in which the foundation-stones stand is found to be very soft. This rock was cut through to the extent of two feet, to ensure that the prepared stone had a secure position.

Now we note the Bible passage, that "no tool was heard" during the erection of the house of God. The absence of stone chippings proves that this statement is true. Anyone who has watched the erection of a house will have noticed the constant clang of the iron tools, and the heaps of brick or stone debris lying close to the foundation. But where was the stone prepared? Come with me to the Cotton Grotto, which is the modern name of the old quarry. The entrance till lately was near the Damascus Gate, over a rubbish-heap; and some feet below the level of the ground you



Solomon's Temple.

find the opening to the quarry. This opening was accidentally discovered in 1852. Huge stones lie scattered about — stones cut thousands of years ago. Masons' marks abound. From them you can tell the size and shape of the tools these old workers used. From the mass of stone chippings it is quite plain that the stones were "dressed" here. The absence of stone chips near the foundation-stones — the black earth being quite free of them — and their presence here, prove to the very hilt the truth of the Bible statement.

And who that has seen — or, if not seen, realized from description — the size of the stones, the great foundation-stone at the south-east angle, will not say that the words "costly stones" is no exaggeration? When we recollect that stones estimated to weigh 100 tons are in the foundation wall, that in length they can be found 38 feet 9 inches, as in the south-east angle, surely we must admit that the account is but sober truth.

The inquiry arises, Why this great wall? This expenditure of stone, labor, skill? There is one factor we must not overlook. The Temple was to be erected over the threshing-floor of Araunah. This is imperative; that was a sacred spot — because the angel had stayed his foot there, that must be left. But Eastern threshing-floors are always, and were always, at the highest points of the ridge, and so the problem is complicated. They cannot cut down the highest point, and so obtain a large area for the proposed Temple. That is impossible; all that remains is to leave the sacred threshing-floor intact, and by building this huge wall, arches, and other supports, so get an enlarged area, big enough for the Temple and the Temple courts. In this way they solved the problem.

Whatever differences have arisen about the other hills of Jerusalem, there is no question that the mount on which the "Mosque of Omar" stands, overhanging the Valley of the Kedron, has from the time of Solomon, if not of David, been regarded as the most sacred ground in Jerusalem. High in the centre of it rises the remarkable rock, now covered by the dome of "the Sakrah." "It is irregular in its form, and measures about sixty feet in one direction, and fifty feet in the other. It projects about five feet above the marble pavement, and the pavement of the mosque is twelve feet above the general level of the enclosure, making this rise seventeen feet above the ground . . . It appears to be the natural surface of Mount Moriah; in a few places there are marks of chiselling; but its south-east corner is an excavated chamber, to which there is a descent by a flight of stone steps. This chamber is irregular in form and its superficial area is about six hundred feet; the average height seven feet. In the centre of the rocky cave there is a circular slab of marble, which being struck, makes a hollow sound, thereby showing that there is a well, or excavation, beneath."

The part of Jerusalem surrounding the Dome of the Rock has been built over so many times and with such a variety of architecture that it

is not easy to imagine its actual appearance during the different epochs in the history of the Holy City. In David's time the high space before us was outside the city, but late in his reign he chose it for the site of the Temple that his son should rear. How magnificent it must have been in Solomon's day, surrounded by corridors and towers, and with the front of the Temple where now the octagonal building stands! Do you not see King Hezekiah walking across that platform, bearing in his hands the insulting message of the Assyrian emperor, to lay it before the Lord, yonder at the Altar, where we see that great dome? Isaiah stands there, with the vision of the Lord of Hosts still illumining his face; Jeremiah, mournful yet courageous,



Mosque of Omar.

delivers his message of woe on that platform. Look at Nebuchadnezzar's army pouring through the broken wall, while the Temple roof rises in flame, and its wall sinks in ashes!

And six hundred years later in the courts of a new Temple, see that child of twelve years standing while a circle of scribes around are wondering at His knowledge of the law, and His mother is pressing her way through the throng to lead Him away. See that child grown now to manhood, with His whip of small cords, driving out the profaners of His Father's House! Listen to Him as He faces the frowning nobles and priests, with answers sharper than sword-thrusts; look at Him as in tender words He teaches the people, and with gentle touch He heals the blind and the lame! Look

at Peter and John, arm in arm, walking across the pavement, and pausing yonder before a helpless cripple, whom they bid arise in the name of Jesus, thus giving him something more precious than silver and gold! Can you see Paul of Tarsus kneeling in prayer yonder, all undisturbed by the muttering and scowling of the mob that in a moment shall be ready to rush upon him with murderous purpose? But up in the tower the Roman soldiers are ready to rescue that apostle from the violence of his countrymen, and lodge him in the castle as a prisoner.

Such are the Biblical events that succeed each other as in a dissolving view through two thousand years, from Abraham to Paul, in the history of this storied spot.

7. Carmel.

1 Kings 18, 24. "Call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord; and, the God that answereth by fire, let him be God."

After the death of King Solomon, his dominion was divided into two kingdoms, the kingdom of Israel or that of the ten tribes, and the kingdom of Judah. This was the punishment for the sin that Solomon had committed by allowing idolatry to regain a foothold in the nation.

The first ruler over the ten tribes, King Jeroboam, caused two golden calves to be made, one at Dan and the other at Bethel, in gross transgression of the divine command which forbade the Children of Israel to represent Him under the form of images. Though not at first intended to replace the worship of Jehovah, the worship introduced by Jeroboam gradually degenerated into actual and gross idolatry. However, God did not entirely withdraw His hand from the chosen people. He sent them prophets, to remind them of His law and to call them to repentance. Even during the reign of King Ahab, when the worship of Baal, the idol of the Canaanites, had become well nigh universal, God preserved for Himself a remnant of faithful believers who listened to the voice of His prophets.

At this time there lived in the wild region of Gilead, beyond Jordan, a great prophet. His name was Elijah. No parentage is given, his birth-place is unknown. The licentious worship introduced by Ahab rouses him, and with terrible suddenness we read his first message to the king: "As the Lord, the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall be no dew or rain these years, but according to my word!" What a picture! The king, Ahab, lapped in luxury, caring for costly things and things of beauty — for did he not make an ivory palace and build cities? — confronted by the prophet of Jehovah, with his scant desert dress. He, in short, tells the king: "Your gods are dead, afar off. The God of Israel is near, a God who rules the seasons. He, the God of your forefathers, gives rain and appoints

harvest time and winter, and in His name I foretell this dire calamity." Elijah immediately leaves, and hides by the brook Cherith.

The traditional site of this brook is now the Wady Kelt, a wild glen which runs into the Jordan Valley, a small stream running through it; but the Bible expression, "facing" or "before" Jordan, would seem to imply that it was east of that river, and therefore in Elijah's own native country of Gilead, out of Ahab's reach. It has not been identified, but it is thought Wady Yabis, opposite Bethshean, may be the place. Here the prophet is



The Mountains of Gilead.

fed in a miraculous manner. No rain falling, the brook dries up, and he is ordered to go to Zarephath, belonging to Zidon. Zarephath, now called Surafend, is the Sarepta of the New Testament. It is on the seashore north of Tyre. The old town was probably nearer the seashore than the present village. The encroachment of the sands probably had something to do with the change of position. The old ruins are considerable, and show that it was a city of some size. Broken columns, marble slabs, old foundations, strew the ground for about a mile. An old chapel is shown which is said to occupy the very site the widow's house stood on — for to a poor widow was the prophet ordered to go. She, in her extremity, has come to the last handful of meal — for the famine has reached even here. And yet,

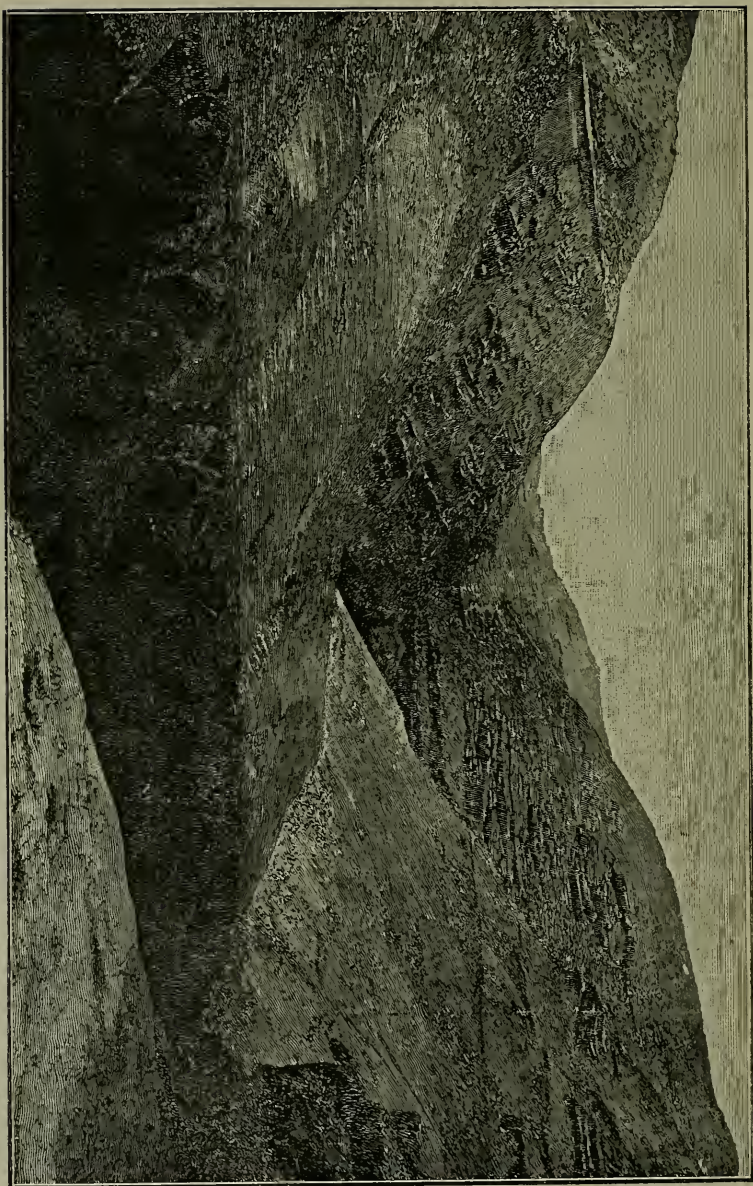
such is her faith, her hospitality to this poor vagrant — for such the prophet must have looked — that she shares the morsel and has a rich return. How little did the great ones of Zarephath know or care about the miracle that was being wrought in their midst!

Three years have passed, and now Elijah is ordered to show himself to Ahab. The famine in Samaria was sore. The direct narrative pauses for a



View from Mount Carmel.

moment to explain that Ahab has a servant Obadiah, “who feared the Lord greatly.” Strange that for controller of his household Ahab should have one who revered God, and who had not followed the courtly example of worshipping Baal! Jezebel, the queen, had slain the prophets of the Lord, except a hundred men hidden by Obadiah. Ahab sends Obadiah in search of water; the king dividing the search of the land with his agent shows how severe was the drought. Samaria, a land of good springs, had become waterless. Obadiah meets the prophet, recognizes him, and also his divine mission: for he — this high official — falls on his face before the gaunt and rude figure of the prophet. He beseeches Elijah not to send him back with



The Brook Cherith.

a message to the king, for he fears that the moment he has left the prophet, Elijah will be taken away by the Spirit of the Lord: and then, Ahab not finding Elijah, he (Obadiah) will be slain by the angry king. He tells Elijah, how close has been the search for him; the rulers of the tribes have been



Elijah by the Brook Cherith.

questioned — nay, put to oath that they knew not the prophet's hiding-place. Reassured by the prophet, he goes, tells the king, and prophet and ruler meet.

Haughtily the king accuses the prophet of being the cause of all the ill the nation is suffering from, while as sternly as before the fearless Elijah hurls back the charge, and distinctly tells him it is for his sin of following Baal.

To put the matter to the test, Elijah proposes that all the prophets of Baal, 450 strong, and those of Astarte, a Canaanite goddess, 400 in number,

shall assemble on Carmel in the presence of all Israel. Ahab complies. The prophets of Baal and of Astarte are gathered on Mount Carmel. But Elijah goes deeper; he appeals to the people. But he finds no response. Elijah exclaims: "Why halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: if Baal, follow him." And he demands that a test be made:

"Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men. Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under: And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the Lord: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken."

The strange scene goes on; the altar to Baal is built; the savage rites, the wild cries of the idolaters, the bloody sacrifices, are of no avail. Elijah taunts them, in the blazing heat of noon, that their god may be otherwise engaged — too busy, or too careless to attend to them! And now evening draws on. The solitary prophet calls the people to greater attention. He alone repairs the altar of the Lord, which false priests have thrown down. Water, at his request is poured on the burnt offering — not once, but again and again; and then follows the prayer to the covenant God of Abraham, of Isaac, and Israel, and fire from God is the answer. "Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench."

At this evidence of power, the people fall on their faces and profess the Lord. No longer do they hesitate, but do the will of the one man. The stern order rings out. "Let not one escape." These worn-out priests are brought down to the brook Kishon and slain. The person of the king is not touched.

Elijah goes to the highest crest of Carmel and tells his servant to look toward the sea. Seven times he does this, and the seventh time the servant sees a cloud arising out of the sea as small as a man's hand. From one of the near tops of Carmel the servant could command a most extensive view, and chiefly seaward and looking west, from which the Syrian rain-clouds come, he would look over towards the distant island of Cyprus, and see the small cloud rising over that land — a cloud which foretold the coming rain even as it does now. And while the prophet spoke the heavens grew black with clouds and winds, and there was a great rain!

Let us visit the scene of this wonderful Old Testament event.

Mount Carmel is situated about thirty miles due west of the Sea of Galilee. It is a ridge forming a bold headland, about 1700 feet high, on the west of the Mediterranean Sea, and extending for miles into the interior

of the country. Around it, the landscape is laid out in fields and carefully cultivated. The country contains a very rich soil, and well repays the labor employed upon it; but taxes — the bane of the farmer through all the Turkish empire — eat up almost all the crops. The knoll from which this plain is first perceived by the traveler has its tradition. It is called by the natives Sheikh Barak, and is believed by them to be the burial place of Barak, who with Deborah, in the days of the Judges, led the Israelites against the Canaanites at Mount Tabor.

A small stream, the River Kishon, follows the direction of Mount Carmel, from the southeast to the northwest. Its many tributary streams water the entire Plain of Esdraelon and make this a garden. There are times after the spring rains when its tide is swollen, and sweeps over these fields like a lake. This peaceful little river has witnessed many scenes of blood. The Canaanite host, under Sisera, were swept in defeat across this plain, when Deborah and Barak won their victory, and horseman and charioteer were swept down together in the current of this river, now so peaceful. Four centuries after Deborah, on the evening of Elijah's great sacrifice, when the fire fell from heaven, it was beside this river that the priests of Baal met their doom, as deceivers of the people. Three hundred years after Elijah, a young king of Judah — Josiah — vainly strove to beat back the host of Egypt on this plain. He fell, and with him fell the last hope of Judah and Jerusalem. Crusaders and Saracens battled here; and Napoleon led his legions to victory in sight of these mountains, almost in our own century. There is not a plain on all the earth that has soaked up so much human blood as this Plain of Esdraelon.

Beyond those fields, rises the side of Mount Carmel. On its southeastern flank, there is an opening in the rocks. Within that hollow is a spring that may have supplied the water with which Elijah drenched his altar before the great sacrifice. But in the base of the mountain, not far away is a larger spring, which is one of the sources of the Kishon, and is more likely to have been used by Elijah. In front of it is a little plain, strewn with rocks. It is large enough for us to imagine the multitudes of Israel assembled upon it, King Ahab seated in his chariot among them, to watch the struggle between the solitary prophet of Jehovah and the priests of Baal. Near by is a little plateau, situated on the eastern extremity of the ridge, which is also the highest point, and a very ancient tradition says that this is the spot where Elijah's altar stood. It has been called by Dean Stanley "one of the most authentic localities of the Old Testament history." He adds: "It is one of the very few, perhaps the only case in which the recollection of an event has been actually retained in the native Arabic designation. Many names of towns have been so preserved, but here is no town, only a shapeless ruin, yet the spot has a name, 'El-Maharrakah,' the 'Burning,' or 'the Sacrifice'"

"The localities adapt themselves to the event in almost every particular. The summit thus marked out is the extreme eastern point of the range, commanding the last view of the sea behind, the first view of the great plain in front, just where the glades of forest, the 'excellency of Carmel', sink into the usual barrenness of the hills and vales of Palestine. There, on the highest point of the mountain, may well have stood, on its sacred 'high place', the altar of the Lord which Jezebel had cast down. Close beneath, on a wide upland sweep, under the shade of ancient olives, and round a well of water, said to be perennial, and which may therefore have escaped the general drought, and have been able to furnish water for the trenches round the altar — must have been ranged, on one side the king and people, with the eight hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and Astarte, and on the other side the solitary and commanding figure of the Prophet of the Lord. In the nearer foreground, immediately under the base of the mountain, was clearly seen the winding stream of the Kishon, working its way through the narrow pass of the hills into the Bay of Acre."

From the summit of the cliff, westwards, a wonderful view is got of the Mediterranean Sea; northwards, Hermon, and part of the Lebanon chain; while to the east Nazareth, Tabor, Nain, Shunem, all lie below. Only from the very summit can the sea be seen, and Elijah's command to his servant was "Go up, and look towards the sea." That sea cannot be seen from the plateau on which it is most probable that the altar stood.

Everything fits so well into the story that we cannot doubt that on this exact spot took place the conflict between the priests of Baal and the prophet of the Most High. "You can imagine," says an American traveller, "the twelve rough stones piled up, the trench dug out of the shallow earth around it, the wood heaped in order, the sacrifice laid upon it. Now see the water brought from yonder spring, or perhaps from the other spring, half a mile away, and poured upon the altar, until it is all dripping and the trench around it is full. Listen now to the prayer of that lonely man of God, and see its answer as the lightning falls from the blue sky, consuming the offering and licking up the water in the trenches! There is a moment of awe-stricken silence, and then the cry of the throng goes up, 'Jehovah, He is God!' The victory has been won, and the God of Elijah is the God of Israel!"

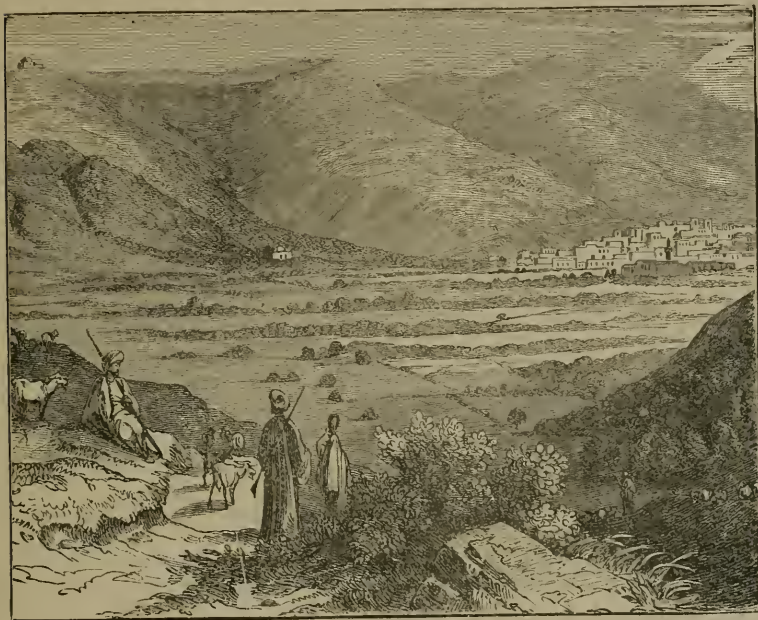
8. Ebal and Gerizim.

Deuteronomy 11,29. Thou shalt put the blessing upon mount Gerizim, and the curse upon mount Ebal.

It was the evening of a day in early summer when Jesus, accompanied by the small band which formed His disciples, passing through Samaria sojourned in the rich plain of that name. The country is one which from

ancient days had abounded in springs and as far as the eye could sweep, the fields were "already white unto the harvest."

The Samaritans were mainly a foreign race, descended from the colonists planted in the land by the Assyrians, though there was a considerable Jewish element in the population. Their worship, originally a mixture of heathenish and Jewish forms, was at the time of Christ purely Jewish. They kept the Sabbath, and the Jewish feasts, and observed generally the ordinances of



Mount Gerizim.

the law given by Moses. Of the Old Testament they accepted only the Five Books of Moses which they interpreted as commanding the erection of a temple, not on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem but on Mount Gerizim.

Jesus and His disciples had reached the Well of Jacob. There Jesus waited while the others went into the adjoining little city of Sychar, the ancient Shechem, to purchase necessary provisions. He is hungry and those fields are white to the harvest; yet far more hungering for the souls of those whom He was to redeem. Over against Him, sheer up over two thousand feet, rises Mount Gerizim with the ruins of the Samaritan temple on it. While He was waiting for the return of His disciples, there came out a

Samaritan woman to draw water from the well. Then came the request "give Me to drink," and then the conversation by which the woman was brought to repentance and to faith.

Sychar and its plain to-day strangely agree with descriptions of the locality which we find in the Bible. Professor A. P. Stanley has this in a record of his travels in the Holy Land: "From the hills through which the main route of Palestine must always have run, and amongst which Shiloh is secluded the traveler descends into a wide plain — the widest and the most beautiful of the plains of the Ephraimite mountains, — one mass of corn, unbroken by boundary or hedge, — from the midst of which start up olive-trees, themselves unenclosed as the fields in which they stand. Its western side is bounded by the abutments of two mountain ranges, running from west to east. These ranges are Gerizim and Ebal; and up the opening between them, not seen from the plain, lies the modern town of Nablus, lodged between the two high mountains which extend on each side of the valley — that on the south, Gerizim, that on the north, Ebal."

Shechem is first mentioned in the dimness of the patriarchal age, as the first spot on which Abraham halted as he entered the land of promise. Under the oaks of Moreh "Abraham rested" and built the first altar to the true God which Canaan had known. At a later day, Jacob, descending probably by the same route as Abraham from the same region in Mesopotamia, entered the land and bought a field at Shechem for a hundred pieces of money.

It was, however, not merely the corn-fields and the valleys, nor even the sacred oaks or terebinths, nor yet the burial-place of Joseph, that gave its main interest to Shechem in the eyes of a true Israelite. High above the fertile vale rose the long rocky ridge of Mount Gerizim, facing the equally long and rocky range of Ebal. From the highest, that is, the eastern summit of that ridge, not equal in actual elevation to Jerusalem, but much more considerable than the Mount of Olives above the level from which it rises, a wide view embraces the Mediterranean Sea on the west, the snowy heights of Hermon on the north, and on the east the wall of the trans-Jordanic mountains, broken by the deep cleft of the Jabbok. The mountain that commands this view, which is to Ephraim what that from Gibeon, or Olivet, is to Judaea, was from very early times a sacred place. Even before the Israelites had entered Palestine, these mountains had acquired a deep meaning in the minds of the Israelites. In his recital of the law, Moses had commanded the people: "When the Lord thy God hath brought thee in unto the land whither thou goest to possess it, . . . thou shalt put the blessing upon Mount Gerizim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal. Are they not on the other side Jordan, in the land of the Canaanites, which dwell in the desert over Gilgal, under the terebinths of Moreh?"

In accordance with this injunction, one of the first solemn gatherings of the people after their entrance into Canaan witnessed the scene described in the Book of Joshua: "Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses in the presence of the children of Israel." Then stood all Israel, half of them on Mount Gerizim and half of them on Mount Ebal, as Moses had commanded, and Joshua "read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law." As each of the divine laws was read, all the men of Israel answered with a loud voice, saying "Amen". It was one of the strangest scenes in all Bible history, and a most solemn assumption of obligations by the entire people. The hills form a great amphitheatre, space enough for the entire people and a natural sounding-board for Joshua's voice. "Every traveler," says Henry A. Harper, "can testify of this. I found that, standing on the slopes of Ebal, my men across the valley and on Gerizim could distinguish all I said." Sir Charles Wilson mentions one fact as to the distance the human voice can here be heard: that during the excavations on Mount Gerizim the Arab workmen were on more than one occasion heard conversing with men passing along the valley below.

Lord Lindsay visited the place in 1838 and thus describes his experience: "Turning up a valley to the west, between the hills of Gerizim and Ebal, (on which the tribes stood in two divisions, when the book of the law, the blessings and curses, and the astonishing prophecies of Moses, were read to them by Joshua, 'and all the people cried Amen!') — we reached Nablus, the ancient Sichem or Sychar, built at the foot and on the lowest slope of Gerizim, and embowered in groves of the richest verdure — figs, mulberries, olives — one solitary palm-tree towering over them, and hedges of the prickly pear, with its fantastic boughs and yellow blossoms, guarding every plantation. It was a sweet evening, the thrushes were singing merrily, and everything smiled around us. Nablus was far too lovely — it would have been disenchantment to enter it — we rode round the town, and encamped beyond it under the olive-trees. A remnant of the Samaritans, about one hundred, still live there, and, at certain seasons, still go up and worship on Gerizim."

As described by travelers, the summit of Ebal is a comparatively level plateau of some extent; there is no actual peak, but the ground rises towards the west. The view is one of the finest in the country. There is a great contrast between the barrenness of Mount Ebal and the fertility of Gerizim. That may be due a good deal to the position of them. Ebal is steeper, and is the northern hill; Gerizim, the southern hill, so that was chosen for the mount of blessing, "life and light" being always associated with the south by the Jews. Gerizim was afterwards chosen by the Samaritans for the site

of their temple, and they claim, too, that it was the mountain on which Abraham offered Isaac.

Here is the Samaritan holy place, for the people take off their shoes when they approach it. The Passover is still eaten there every Easter week, but the community is becoming very small. Towards sunset a few men in white surplices recite a form of prayer near the circular pit in which the lambs are roasted; then all the full-grown men join, prayer and prostrations continue till sunset, when the priest rapidly repeats the twelfth chapter of



Samaritans worshipping on Gerizim.

Exodus. The lambs are killed while the priest is speaking; they are skinned and cleaned, the bodies then placed in the pit till roasted; then the covering is taken off, the bodies drawn out and placed on brown mats; then they are taken to the trench and laid out in line between the two files of the Samaritans, who now have shoes on their feet and staves in their hands. Short prayers follow. They suddenly seat themselves, and commence to eat silently and rapidly, until the whole is consumed.

Poor Samaritans! Deluded idolaters, hardened in their rejection of Him who at the foot of Gerizim had spoken, in the days of His flesh, to the woman from Samaria, and had instructed her regarding the nature of true worship! Trying to gain the favor of God by vain sacrifices, sacrifices for which not Gerizim but Jerusalem had once been the place appointed! Theirs

is a religion of the dead past of which even our Lord had said that by such unauthorized worship in a place which God had not chosen the Samaritans showed their ignorance of God, whereas "salvation is of the Jews." In the future, God would accept only the worship of the spirit and of the heart, a worship resting upon Him who was to suffer in Jerusalem and thereby present to God a church which would worship Him in spirit and in truth.

9. Mount of Transfiguration.

Matthew 17, 1. 2. He bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them.

In the name of the Twelve, Peter had confessed that Jesus was the very Christ of God, the fulfilment of all Old Testament prophecy. This confession at once separated them from all around, and gathered them into one, even Christ. And Jesus declared: "On this Rock will I build My church." On this Truth that Jesus is the only Savior, the Church shall stand forever.

The event had taken place in the neighborhood of Caesarea, in the most northern part of the Holy Land. During the days that followed, we can have no doubt that the disciples received additional instruction concerning the sufferings that were approaching at Jerusalem and the death of their Lord. All this led up to the revelation of His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration.

There can scarcely be any doubt that Christ and His disciples had left the neighborhood of Caesarea, and hence, that "the Mount" must have been one of the slopes of gigantic, snowy, Hermon. It could not have been to one of the highest peaks to Hermon, as some modern writers suppose, that Jesus led His companions. There are three such peaks: those north and south, of about equal height (9,400 feet above the sea, and nearly 11,000 above the Jordan valley), are only 500 paces distant from each other, while the third, to the west, about 100 feet lower, is separated from the others by a narrow valley. Now, to climb the top of Mount Hermon is, even from the nearest point, very trying and fatiguing. It would occupy a whole day, six hours going up and four coming down, and require provisions of food and water. From the keenness of the air, it would be impossible to spend the night on the top. To all this there is no allusion in the text, nor the slightest hint of either difficulties or preparations, such as otherwise would have been required. Indeed, a contrary impression is left on the mind. "Up into a high mountain apart," went Jesus, "to pray."

Edersheim says: "The Sabbath-sun had set, and a delicious cool hung in the summer air, as Jesus and the three commenced their ascent. From

all parts of the land, as far as Jerusalem or Tyre, the one great object in view must always have been snow-clad Hermon. And now it stood out before them in all the wondrous glory of a sunset: first rose-colored, then deepening red, next the death-like pallor, and the darkness relieved by the snow, in quick succession."

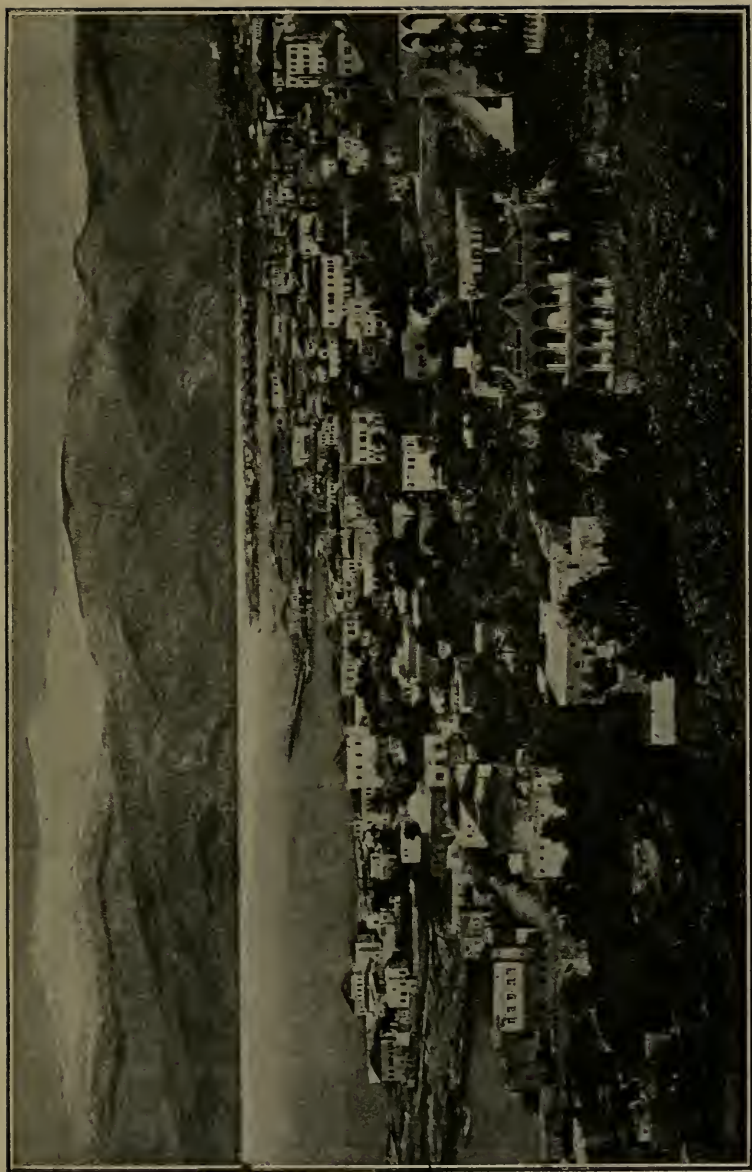
As they ascended in the cool of that Sabbath evening, the keen mountain air must have breathed strength into the climbers, and the scent of snow —



Mount Hermon.

for which the parched tongue would long in summer's heat — have refreshed them. We know not what part may have been open to them of the glorious view from Hermon, embracing as it does a great part of Syria from the sea to Damascus, from the Lebanon and the gorge of the Litany to the mountains of Moab; or down the Jordan valley to the Dead Sea; or over Galilee, Samaria, and on to Jerusalem, and beyond it. But such darkness as that of a summer's night would creep on.

On that mountain-top "He prayed." Although the text does not expressly state it, we can scarcely doubt, that He prayed with the disciples,



Lebanon seen from Beirut.

and still less, that He prayed for them, as did Elijah for his servant, when the city was surrounded by Syrian horsemen: that his eyes might be opened to behold heaven's host—the "far more that are with us than they that are with them."

"And as He prayed, the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment was white and glistering. And, behold, there talked with Him two men, which were Moses and Elias: who appeared in glory, and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with Him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him. And it came to pass, as they departed from Him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias; not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him. And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen."

This is the brief but wonderful story of the Transfiguration, as told in the Gospels. As Jesus prayed, His divinity began to shine through His human nature, becoming visible to the eye, until His entire figure shone as the sun, His clothing even radiating light, and becoming, as Mark says, "white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." His form shone, not like that of Moses in ancient time with borrowed light, but with a glory which came from within and was His own. The spectacle must have been inexpressibly glorious.

Moses and Elijah appeared, the former representing the Law, and the latter the Prophets, since Christ is the end of the Law (Romans 10,4) and the object of all prophecy. For more than nine hundred years Elijah had been in heaven, and for more than fourteen hundred years Moses had been away from this world; and now both reappear, still living, speaking, recognized in some way not stated in the Gospels, by the disciples. There are many texts in Scripture which say that men live after they are dead, but here is an illustration of the truth. Here are two men, long centuries after they have left the earth, still living and serving their Lord.

One of the Gospels gives us the subject of the talk — it was about Christ's death on Calvary. These men were sent from heaven to comfort and strengthen Jesus for the journey to His cross. He would have bitter sorrows and great sufferings, and they came to cheer Him. We are not told that He was afraid or that He was in danger of growing faint-hearted before He reached His cross. But before entering on His great Passion, our Lord was to receive one more pledge of the Father's love. So the heavenly mess-

engers were sent to earth to talk with Jesus about His death, and what it would mean to the world, that He might, according to His human nature, be strengthened for it.

During the brief visit of these princes of the Old Testament, Peter offered to build temporary houses for their accommodation; but he spoke in the fright and excitement of the moment. Then came a bright cloud, the visible glory which manifested the presence of God, even as He appeared in the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, in the cloud that filled Solomon's temple and visibly rested upon the Ark of the Covenant. From it spoke the Father Himself testifying to Christ's divine Sonship. The disciples had been greatly shocked by what Jesus had told them six days before — that He must suffer and be killed. Now from heaven the Father speaks, assuring them that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, and that they should listen to His voice, and to His voice only. Even if they could not understand, even if the things He said seemed to destroy all their hopes, they must be content to hear.

Mount Hermon whose snowy peak looked down upon this marvelous event, is the greatest mountain in Palestine proper, more than 9,000 feet above the sea, and the only one on whose peaks the snow remains throughout the year. To travelers in Palestine a wondrous sight, as it looms above the northern horizon, it is to Christians most memorable as the mount connected with the Transfiguration of our Lord. Christians love to think of that revelation of their Savior's divine glory.

Lord! it is good for us to be
Where rest the souls that dwell with Thee:
Where stand revealed to mortal gaze
The great old sàints of other days —
Who once received on Horeb's height
The eternal laws of truth and right;
Or, caught the still, small whisper, higher
Than storm, than earthquake, or than fire.

"Lord! it is good for us to be
Enranced, enwrapped, alone with Thee;
Watching the glistening raiment glow,
Whiter than Hermon's whitest snow.
The human lineaments which shine
Irradiant with a light divine,
Till we, too, change from grace to grace,
Gazing on that transfigured Face."

(A. P. Stanley.)

Christ, our bliss — all joys combining,
Thy face above the sun is shining,
A glitt'ring robe thy form arrays;
Glory bright from thee is beaming,
Thy voice of truth thy worth proclaiming,
While from the Father's mouth it says

In love's endearing tone —

"This is my only son,

"Me well pleasing:

"His wish regard! And your reward

"Be endless glory with the Lord!"

Can one glimpse, so quickly over,
Suffice us, Jesus, to discover
The splendors of thy high estate?
All its wonders to be telling,
We need to build for thee a dwelling,
And evermore around thee wait.

Dear Savior, at thy side

Joy, health and peace abide —

Hallelujah!

Here, Lord, with thee 't is good to be,
From ev'ry care and sorrow free.

Lord of life, to earth returning,
Our bodies with thy light adorning,
Give us thy splendor then to see!
When our dust, o'er grave victorious,
And fashion'd like His body glorious,
Shall splendid and immortal be, —

Far brighter light will shine

Than, Hermon, e'er was thine!

While Hosannas!

Of higher praise our tongues shall raise,
On Zion's hill, through endless days.

10. The Mount of Preaching.

Matthew 5,1. 2. And seeing the multitude, he went up into a mountain;
and when he was set, his disciples came unto him; and he opened his mouth,
and taught them.

It was probably on one of those mountain-ranges which stretch to the
north of Capernaum, that Jesus had spent the night of lonely prayer, which



Mount Tabor.

preceded the choosing of the Twelve. As the morning broke He called up those who had recognized in Him the promised Messiah of Israel and from them chose the twelve who were to be His first messengers.

The early light of day, however, had already guided a great and eager multitude to the broad level plain at the foot of the Galilean ridge, to bring to Him their needs of soul and of body. To them Jesus now went down with words of comfort and power of healing. As they pressed around Him for that touch with brought healing of their diseases, He spoke to them



The Mount of Beatitudes.

at length regarding His kingdom. In order to be heard of all He retired again to the mountain height. Through the clear air of the bright spring day He uttered what has ever since been known as the "Sermon on the Mount."

According to traditional view this mount was the so-called Horns of Hattin on the road from Tiberias to Nazareth, about one and one-half hours to the north-west of Tiberias. The Horns of Hattin are a double peaked mountain some five miles west of the Sea of Galilee. The view from the top, says Lord Lindsay, "is lovely. The Sea of Galilee lies before you, outstretched like a map — its northern extremity, broken by creeks, but circular in the main, is quite distinct, while the eye follows the eastern shore for many a mile, till the mountains close in and conceal the southern extremity.

The snowy ridge of Mount Hermon is seen in the distance." Every place on which the eye rests has its memories, sacred and historical. Not only did Jesus, according to ancient tradition, sit on this mountain and utter those words of blessing (The Beatitudes) with which the greatest of recorded sermons begins, — another and more momentous event may have taken place here also. You remember that it was on "the mountain in Galilee" that the Risen Christ appeared to the great body of His disciples — five hundred in number, wrote the Apostle Paul. If this is the mountain of the Sermon, then it is also the mountain of that official appearance, when the Christ gave His great commission to His followers.

The Sermon on the Mount was spoken, if not on the very mountain now pointed out in the plain of Hattin, yet certainly on one of the heights of the western shore of the lake, and, therefore, commanding a view, in its essential features common to all of them, and well known to us now. It must be granted that there are very few passages in that discourse which are illustrated, still fewer which are explained, by a sight of the localities. These few, though often noticed, are here briefly collected.

"The City on a Hill." One of the most striking objects in the prospect from any of these hills, especially from the traditional Mount of the Beatitudes, is the city of Safed, placed high on a bold spur of the Galilean Anti-Lebanon. If any city or fortress existed on that site at the time of the Christian era, it is difficult to doubt the allusion to it, in "the city 'lying' on the mountain top." The only other that could be embraced within the view of the speaker would be the village and fortress of Tabor, which would be distinctly visible from the Mount of the Beatitudes, though not from the hills on the lake-side. Either or both of these would suggest the illustration, which would be more striking from the fact, that this situation of cities on the tops of hills is as rare in Galilee as it is common in Judaea.

The Birds and the Flowers. The most remarkable appeal to nature, which occurs in the whole of the New Testament, is found in this discourse, — "Behold the fowls of the air," and "Consider the lilies of the field." The flocks of birds in the neighborhood of Gennesareth, their number, their beauty, their contrast with the busy stir of sowing and reaping, and putting into barns, visible in the plain below, must all be taken into account. What the especial flower may be, which is here indicated by the word which we translate "lily", it is impossible precisely to determine. The only "lilies" which one sees in Palestine in the months of March and April are large yellow water-lilies, as, for instance, in the clear spring of 'Ain-Mellaheh, near the Lake of Merom. But if, as is probable, the name may include the numerous flowers of the tulip or amaryllis kind, which appear in the early summer, or the autumn of Palestine, the expression becomes more natural, — the red and golden hue more fitly suggesting the comparison with the

proverbial gorgeousness of the robes of Solomon. And, though there may not be any special appropriateness to Galilee, the brilliant flowers of Palestine are one of the most attractive features of its scenery, the more so from the want of color or form in the general landscape.

The Torrent. The image with which, both in St. Matthew and St. Luke, the discourse concludes, is one familiar to all eastern and southern climates, — a torrent, suddenly formed by the mountain rains, and sweeping away all before it in its descent through what a few minutes before had been a dry channel. Yet it may be observed that it is an image far more natural in Galilee than in Judaea; whether we take the perennial streams which run through the Plain Gennesareth, or the torrent-streams of the Kishon and the Belus, which on the west run through the Plain of Esdraelon to the Mediterranean. There is more aptitude in this likeness, as applied to them, than if applied to the scanty and rare flooding of the Kedron and the corresponding wadys of the south. The sudden inundation of the Kishon is already historical from the Old Testament; and, if we are to press the allusion to the “sand”, on which was built “the house that fell”, then there is no other locality in Palestine to which we can look, except the long sandy strip of land which bounds the eastern plain of Acre, and through which the Kishon flows into the sea.

11. Calvary.

Luke 23,33. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

Walking down one of the principal thoroughfares of Jerusalem, the Damascus Gate Street, the traveler reaches the northern wall of the Holy City. Let us take our stand on this wall and look toward the north and we have before us a prospect familiar to millions of eyes through the long past. Look for a moment on that rounded grassy knoll, with the two caverns yawning under it, and then recall those lines which have been sung so often:

“There is a green hill far away
Without a city wall
Where the dear Lord was crucified
Who died to save us all.”

There is good evidence for the identification of the Hill of Golgotha or Calvary. Jesus was crucified outside the city, and this elevation was once without the wall. The resemblance of its general lines to a human skull,

its two caves suggesting two eye sockets, very probably suggested the name "Golgotha" — "skull-like". Moreover, we know the cross was planted in a public place, near to the city; and this is beside the Damascus road, one of the most frequented in all the land. Then, from early Jewish writings, we learn that this hill was given up to the execution of criminals, and received the name, "Place of Stoning."

If then we have no reason to doubt that this is indeed "the place called Calvary," then it is the center of the Christian world.

Picture to yourself three crosses yonder, with One Innocent in the center; see the circle of Jewish enemies and Roman soldiers around Him; look at the sorrow-smitten mother, the sympathizing women, the beloved disciple standing near; see the gloom gathering over the landscape, and hear the seven mighty words sounding out from the lips of the Crucified. And then remember that it was for us He hung and suffered there! "Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

What Thou, my Lord hast suffered,
Was all for sinners' gain:
Mine, Mine was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.
Lo! here I fall, my Savior;
'Tis I deserve Thy place;
Look on me with Thy favor,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.

There is another place of deep interest at the base of this hill. On the extreme left, we see an enclosed garden and beyond, a cliff in the shadow. At the bottom of this cliff there is visible from the northern wall of Jerusalem a small dark spot. This is the entrance to a tomb discovered by General Gordon; it is hollowed out of the rock, as are many of the ancient sepulchres around Jerusalem. It has been named, "The Tomb of our Lord." Let us go and look into it. Even the possibility that we may be looking upon the rock-walls which once enclosed the body of Jesus makes our heart beat faster! And it should bring the scenes of the burial, the sealing, and the rising vividly before us. Not far away stood the cross — it could not have been more than a quarter of a mile away — from which tender hands took down the torn, dead body of "Him who they had trusted would redeem Israel."

Imagine the little procession down the hillside in the gathering gloom; the body hastily wrapped in linen clothes, and the napkin covering the

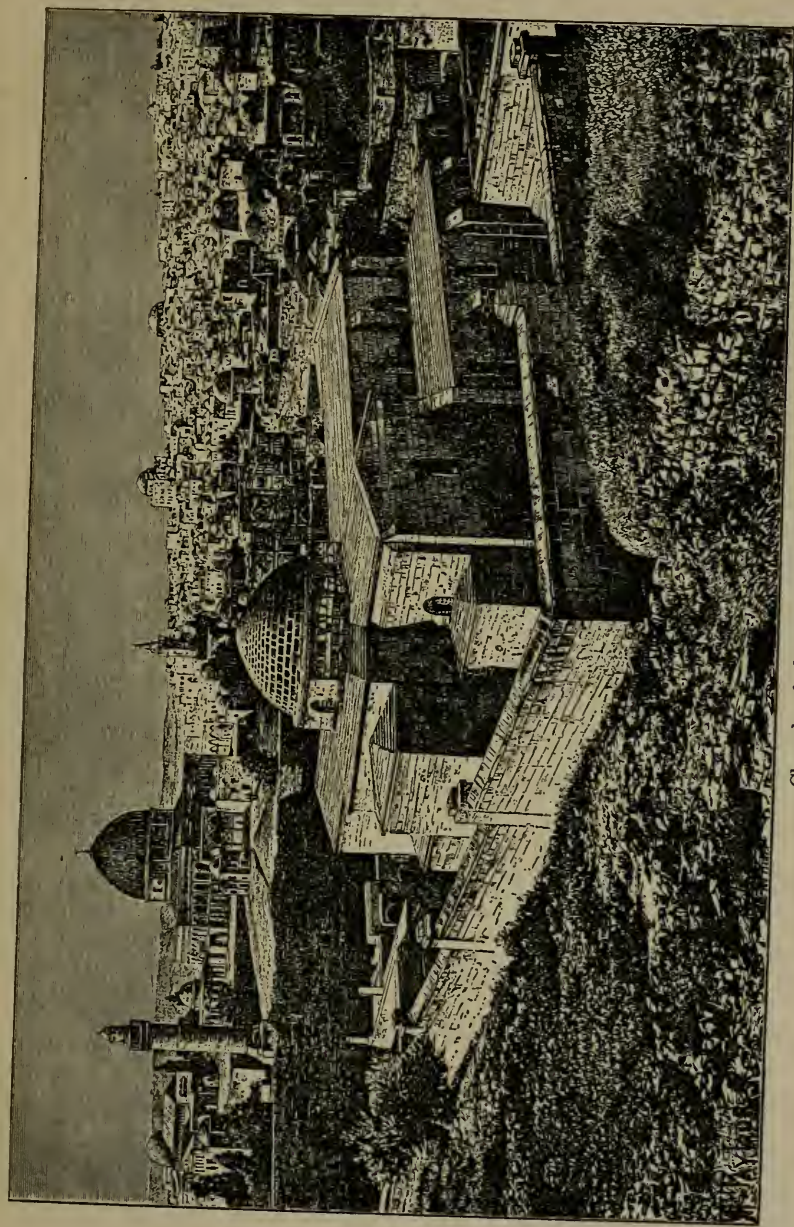
face; the women standing by and watching while all that seems to be left of the Nazarene is laid to rest in yonder rocky bed; the stone rolled against the door, and stamped with the ruler's seal. Can we bring home to ourselves how they felt on that night as they turned away from the tomb and from the hill?

It was here, or in connection with such a tomb as this, that occurred that most momentous of all events for the salvation of the world — Christ's resurrection from the dead. Our salvation depends upon this — a risen Christ: "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and our faith is also vain."

Can you picture to yourself the surprise when the women found the great stone rolled away, and an angel sitting upon it? Can you put yourself in John's place as he stood in the open door of the tomb, and reverently hesitated to enter it? How like John it was to stand at the entrance; and how like Peter it was to rush forward into the tomb, and see for himself that the body was no longer there! Do you remember that John, though second to enter the tomb, was the first to believe that His Master had risen; and to believe before he had seen Him living? He saw the long grave-clothes wrapped and lying in order; he saw the napkin that had covered the face carefully folded and laid by itself; and then the conviction rolled upon his consciousness that this was no stealthy robbery of a grave, but the calm conduct of One who was in no haste to depart. "Then that disciple saw and believed!" Blessed were they who believed after they had seen their Lord; more blessed the disciple who believes without the sight.

Holy Cross of Calvary,
Through night's shadows gleaming;
Tender Tree of Life, from thee
Floods of life are streaming.
Holy Cross of Calvary,
Through the ages beaming;
Calling every heart to thee,
To the grace redeeming.

Holy Cross of Calvary,
Hope of every nation;
Holy blood was shed on thee,
For the world's salvation.
Holy Cross of Calvary,
Point me to thy Savior,
By whose wounds my soul shall be
Cleansed and blest forever.



Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Holy Cross of Calvary,
Basking in the splendor;
I will praise unceasingly
Christ, my true Defender.
Holy Cross of Calvary,
Life is swiftly passing;
Let me always cling to thee,
In my faith progressing.

Holy Cross of Calvary,
Help my weak endeavor;
Sin and evil let me flee,
Make me holy ever.
Holy Cross of Calvary,
In death's fatal hour;
Brighten thou the way for me,
Be my strength and tower.

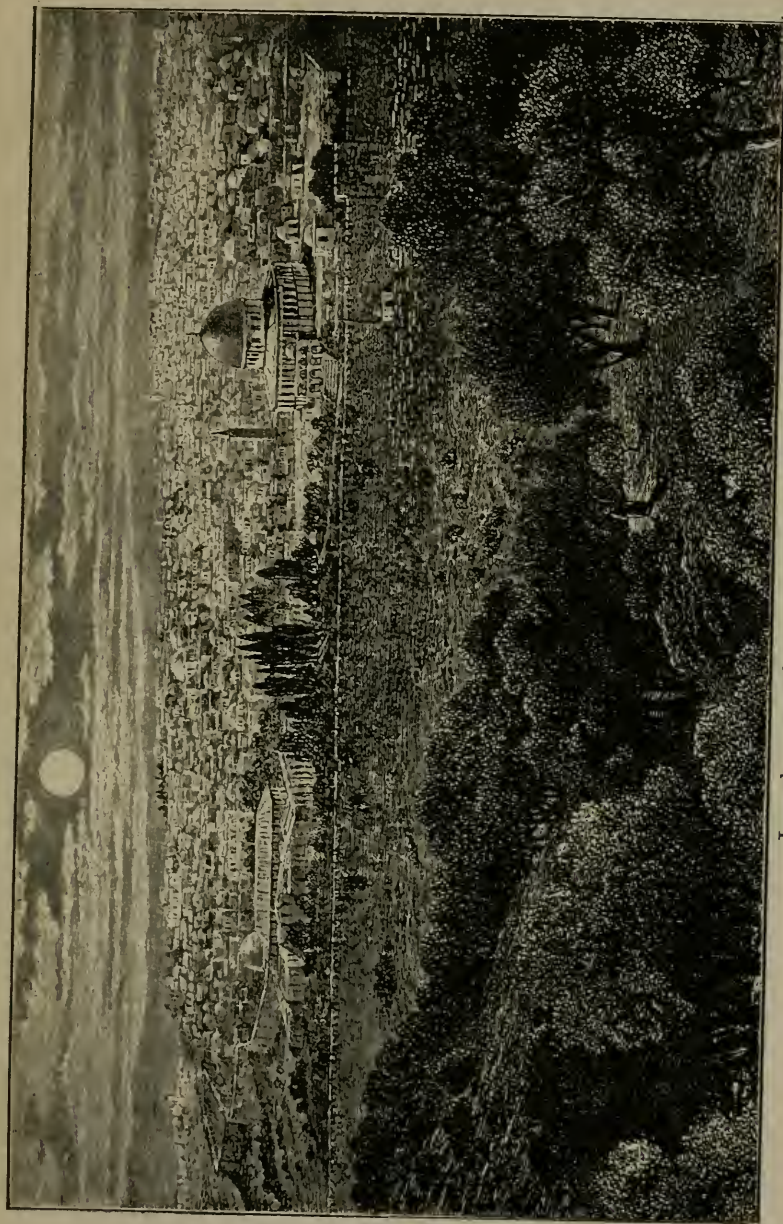
J. T. Mueller.

12. Olivet.

Luke 22,39. "And He came out and went, as He was wont, to the mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him."

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so is the Lord round about His people." Ps. 125,2. How familiar the description to every Bible reader. Jerusalem, the Holy City, encompassed with a barrier of heights, literally shut in by mountains on the eastern side, where it may be said to be enclosed by the arms of the Mount of Olives (Olivet) with its outlying ridges. Only in two instances do the mountains surrounding Jerusalem rise to any considerable height. Olivet is only 180 feet above the top of Mount Zion.

The Mount of Olives is a long ridge with four distinct summits, of which one is called the mount of Offense, because Solomon built altars to the idols there, and another, Ascension, because it is believed that on this spot Christ ascended to heaven. There is a road branching off to the right which skirts the foot of the Mount of Olives, and follows the valley. The main road climbing the hill is the carriage road around to Bethany, which lies a mile and a half to the eastward. That is the road which our Savior must have trodden over and over again in His visits to Jerusalem; for He made His home in Bethany and went back and forth daily; to the city in the morning, and returning to Bethany in the evening. How real the story seems as we look on that old road! Does it not bring up to you vividly the days between



Jerusalem, seen from the Mount of Olives.

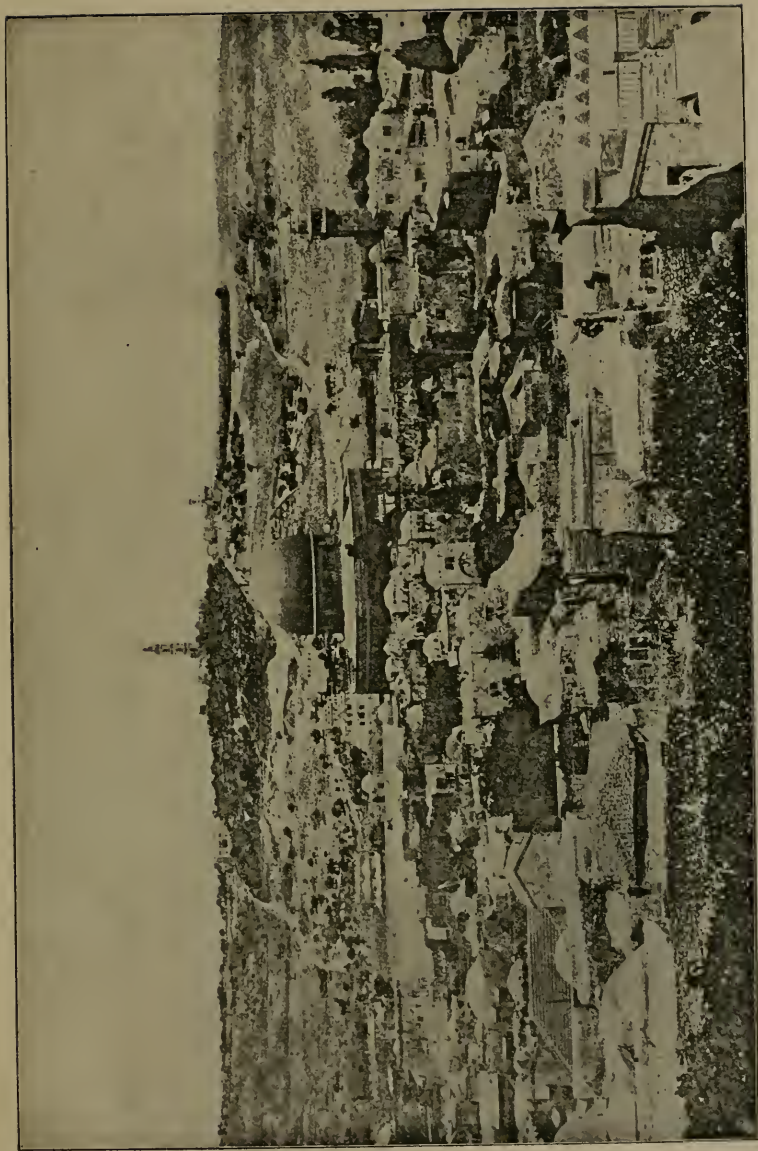
the Anointing and the Last Supper, when every day (save Wednesday) Jesus walked over that road to the city, and then at evening sought again the shelter and safety of that home in Bethany?

The olives and olive-yards from which it derived its name, must at that time have clothed it far more completely than at present. The whole area was distinguished, as it is to some extent today, by its thick plantations of olives, figs, and palms, — hence the names Bethphage (House of Figs) and Bethany (House of Dates). To this day there are in the Garden of Gethsemane eight aged olive-trees, whose appearance has always struck even the most indifferent observers. Their gnarled trunks and scanty foliage mark them out from all other trees on the mountain and by their appearance of extreme age carry us back to the events of the gospel story.

A far view is obtained from the summit of the Mount of Olives. Passing gradually east from the wilderness of Judea, the eye is caught by the intense blue of the Dead Sea lying nearly four thousand feet below, but in the clear atmosphere looking very near, while behind lie the beautiful hills of Moab. More in the foreground a few houses of Bethany appear, and northward is a view of the Jordan Valley, through the center of which may be traced, as a serpent line of green, the course of that famous river.

To the immediate west is the Holy City, separated by the deep Valley of Jehoshaphat. Just within the wall lies the Dome of the Rock, the top of Moriah, and in the open space of the great Temple area figures of people may be discerned moving about. Beyond lie the domed houses of the modern inhabitants, pile above pile, and many church towers. Beyond the Tower of David, on the horizon, the western mountains of Judea shut off the distant sea.

With its wealth of memories from Bible stories this view, best seen about the hour of sunset, is the most fascinating in the Holy Land, yes, in the entire world. It is a scene on which the eyes of Christ must frequently have rested. Says Lord Lindsay, in his Letters on the Holy Land: "There is no spot (you will not now wonder at my saying so) at, or near, Jerusalem, half so interesting as the Mount of Olives, and, on the other hand, from no other point is Jerusalem seen to such advantage. Oh! what a relief it was to quit its narrow, filthy, ill-paved streets for that lovely hill, climbing it by the same rocky path our Savior and His faithful few so often trod, and resting on its brow as they did, when their divine instructor, looking down on Jerusalem in her glory, uttered those memorable prophecies of her fall, of His Second Advent, and of the final Judgment, which we should ever brood over in our hearts as a warning voice, bidding us watch and be ready for His coming! Viewed from the Mount of Olives, Jerusalem is still a lovely, a majestic object; but her beauty is external only, and like the bitter apples of Sodom, she is found full of rottenness within, —



A View of the Holy City. Dome of the Rock in center, Mount of Olives in the back-ground.

'In Earth's dark circle once the precious gem
Of Living Light — Oh, fallen Jerusalem!'"

The Mount of Olives is inseparably united with the Holy City. It was the open ground — for pleasure, for worship, and other purposes — of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, its green slopes, as seen in the early spring, standing out in refreshing contrast to the aged city at its foot. The few notices which we find of it in the older history are in accordance with this location. The sacrifice of the "red heifer" (Num. 19,2. 3) was celebrated on the slope of Olivet. David, before the Temple was built, was accustomed to "worship God at the top of the Mount" (2 Sam. 15,32). On its summit, Solomon in his later years permitted the worship of foreign gods. By the ascent of Mount Olivet David went up, on his flight from Jerusalem, at the news that Absalom was in revolt against him. At the top of the Mount he met Hushai, and had his last view of the rebellious city. As he descended the rough road on the other side, Shimei threw stones at him and cursed him.

More abundant and replete with interest, however, are those associations, already alluded to, which Olivet derives from the closing scenes of the life of our Savior. Let us briefly go through the main points of interest. From Bethany we must begin, a wild mountain hamlet today, perched on a broken plateau of rock, in its foreground the deep descent to the Jordan Valley, the scene of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Lord Lindsay writes: "Nor is there, thank God! any doubt about Bethany, the home of that happy family, so peculiarly our Lord's friends during His latter years, His own home, indeed, during His last visit to Jerusalem. It is a sweet retired spot, beautifully situated on the slope of a hill to the south of Mount Olivet. The path to Jerusalem winds round the Mount, and through the Vale of Jehoshaphat, precisely, to all appearance, as it did when the Messiah rode thither in regal but humble triumph, and the people strewed their garments and branches in the way. They show you the supposed tomb of Lazarus, an excavation in the rock, to which you descend by many steps. It lies to the west of the town, and cannot therefore, I think, be the spot. When Mary rose up hastily and went out to meet our Savior coming from Jericho, the Jews thought she was going to the grave to weep there; the sepulchre must therefore have been to the east of the city, and in fact I saw two or three ancient tombs by the wayside in that direction, one of which may have been Lazarus's."

On the further side of that dark abyss Martha and Mary knew that Christ was abiding when they sent their messenger; up that long ascent they had often watched His approach — up that long ascent He came when, outside the village, Martha and Mary met Him, and the Jews stood round weeping. Up that same ascent He came, also, at the beginning of the week

of His Passion. One night He halted in the village, in the morning He set forth on His journey. Along the road by which mounted travelers always approach the city from Jericho, Jesus passed on Palm Sunday.



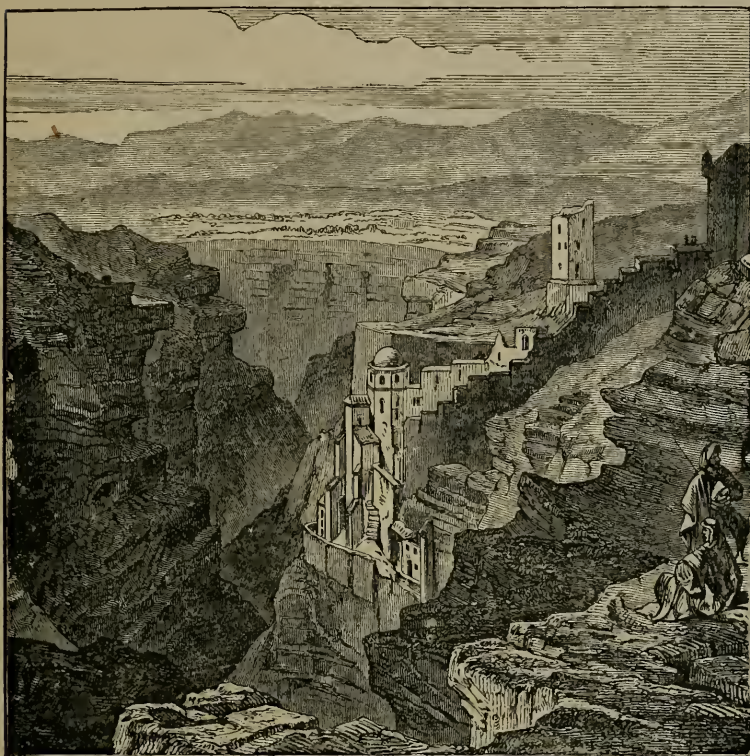
Jesus in Gethsemane.

Two vast streams of people met on that day. The one poured out from the city, and as they came through the gardens whose clusters of palm rose on the south-eastern corner of Olivet, they cut down the long branches, as was their wont at the Feast of Tabernacles, and moved upwards towards Bethany, with loud shouts of welcome. From Bethany streamed forth the crowds who had assembled there on the previous night, and who came

testifying to the great event at the sepulchre of Lazarus. The road soon loses sight of Bethany. It is now a rough, but still broad and well-defined mountain track, winding over rock and loose stones; a steep declivity below on the left; the sloping shoulder of Olivet above it on the right; fig-trees below and above, here and there growing out of the rocky soil. Along the road the multitudes threw down the branches which they cut as they went along, or spread out a rude matting formed of the palm-branches they had already cut as they came out. The larger portion — those, perhaps, who escorted Him from Bethany — unwrapped their loose cloaks from their shoulders, and stretched them along the rough path, to form a momentary carpet as He approached. The two streams met midway. Half of the vast mass, turning round, preceded, the other half followed. Gradually the long procession swept up and over the ridge, where first begins "the descent of the Mount of Olives" towards Jerusalem. At this point the first view is caught of the south-eastern corner of the city. The Temple and more northern portions are hid by the slope of Olivet on the right; what is seen is only Mount Zion, now for the most part a rough field, crowned with the Mosque of David and the angle of the western walls, but then covered with houses to its base, surmounted by the Castle of Herod, on the supposed site of the palace of David, from which that portion of Jerusalem, emphatically the "City of David", derived its name. It was at this precise point, "as He drew near, at the descent of the Mount of Olives," — (may it not have been from the sight thus opening upon them?) — that the shout of triumph burst forth from the multitude, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed is the kingdom that cometh of our father David. Hosanna . . . peace . . . glory in the highest." There was a pause as the shout rang through the long defile; and, as the Pharisees who stood by in the crowd complained, He pointed to the stones which, strewn beneath their feet, would immediately "cry out" if "these were to hold their peace."

Again the procession advanced. The road descends a slight declivity, and the glimpse of the city is again withdrawn behind the intervening ridge of Olivet. A few moments, and the path mounts again, it climbs a rugged ascent, it reaches a ledge of smooth rock, and in an instant the whole city bursts into view. As now the dome of the Mosque El-Aksa rises like a ghost from the earth before the traveler stands on the ledge, so then must have risen the Temple tower; as now the vast enclosure of the Mohammedan sanctuary, so then must have spread the Temple courts; as now the gray town on its broken hills, so then the magnificent city, with its background — long since vanished away — of gardens and suburbs on the western plateau behind. Immediately below was the Valley of Kidron, here seen in its greatest depth as it joins the Valley of Hinnom, and thus giving full

effect to the great peculiarity of Jerusalem, seen only on its eastern side—its situation as of a city rising out of a deep abyss. It is hardly possible to doubt that this rise and turn of the road,—this rocky ledge,—was the exact point where the multitude paused again, and “He, when He beheld the city, wept over it.”



The Kidron Gorge near the Monastery of Mar-Saba.

On one of the rocky banks of the mountain, immediately “over against the Temple,” He sat and saw the sun go down over the city, and foretold its final doom. Bethany, on the further side, was the home to which He retired; any of the fig-trees which spring out of the rocky soil on either side of the road, might be the one which bore no fruit. On the wild uplands which immediately overhang the village, He withdrew from the eyes of His disciples, in a seclusion which, perhaps, could nowhere else be found so near the stir of a

mighty city — the long ridge of Olivet screening those hills, and those hills the village beneath them, from all sound or sight of the city behind, the view opening only on the wide waste of desert rocks and ever-descending valleys, into the depths of the distant Jordan and its mysterious lake. At this point the last interview took place. "He led them out as far as Bethany;" and "they returned" probably by the direct road, over the summit of Mount Olivet.

There is more than one allusion to the Mount of Olives in the sayings of Christ. While the place where the parable of the fig-tree was spoken is uncertain, it is natural to connect it with this locality because Olivet, besides its abundance of olives, is still sprinkled with fig-trees. Two other allusions are undoubtedly connected with Olivet. One is the parable, not spoken, but acted, with regard to the fig-tree which while others around it were bare, was alone clothed with its broad green leaves, though without the corresponding fruit. On Olivet, too, the brief parable in the great prophecy was spoken, when He pointed to the bursting buds of spring in the same trees, as they grew around Him: — "Behold the fig-tree and all the trees — when they now shoot forth — when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand." It is possible, too, that the parable of the sheep and the goats was suggested to our Lord as such a flock wandered up the sides of the hill while He was sitting there with His disciples over against the Temple and described the scene of the Judgment as mankind is being divided into the sheep on His right hand and the goats on His left. Very probably too He addressed on Olivet to the Pharisees the parable of the Good Shepherd.

Reference has already been made to Gethsemane. In that enclosed garden, where the three roads over the Mount of Olives united, where tall cypress-trees rise and a few olive-trees darken the further corner, only four days after the Hosannas rang, our Savior bowed in His dread agony. Your sins and mine added to the weight of His sufferings in that awful hour. The aged olive-trees, already described, may well be the descendants of those whose leaves rustled on that night as the Savior knelt groaning in the garden. At any rate, we know that the place cannot be more than a few rods from where those trees stand.

Last of all we visit the southern summit of Olivet, which reaches 2,723 feet above sea level and which is the traditional Mount of the Ascension. Here the first Christian emperor, Constantine, erected his church of the Ascension in 316, on the site where now stands another church of the same name. Scattered over the summit is a modern Mohammedan village, whose noisy and beggarly inhabitants spoil the quiet today and the holy associations of this sacred and storied spot. Here our Lord departed from His disciples, from this precise spot, or from another, nearer Bethany. There

can be no doubt that the last and most glorious manifestation of His exaltation which His disciples received from their risen Master took place on Mount Olivet. Here He withdrew His visible presence from earth, here He was taken up by a bright cloud as He ascended to heaven, to sit at the right hand of His Father and once to return again to judge the quick and the dead.



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